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HOW I BECAME A PARSON.

HAVING noticed that young ministers are made the pets of their congregations, and generally have the choice of all the fat things there are going—that they have the unqualified admiration of the pastoral flock, who vie with each other in working the prettiest slippers, the most comfortable easy-chairs and foot-stools, the most significant and elaborate bookmarks—that they come in always for a fat slice of desirable property, in case any pious lady of the congregation dies and leaves large legacies for "charitable purposes"—that they always take the precedence in society, are loved by the ladies and referred to by gentlemen, and that, in fact, they always manage, whenever there's a smart shower of fat things, to be out in the rain and get very wet, I made up my mind that I would study for the ministry, and prepare myself for pulpit exercise.

Well, I sent word to my native village that I was "reformed," etc., and that I wanted to study preaching and become an ornament to the pulpit, and so forth. So great was the joy over my resolve, that the "Ladies Association for the Support, Encouragement and Education of all Christian young fellows who want to preach," at once got up a fair, and a banquet, and a picnic and a series of weekly meetings for the purpose of helping me. At the fair the customary religious swindles were perpetrated on the unfortunate gentlemen who had been inveigled there, and a large number of reluctant dollars were coaxed into the fund. By this time I had begun my studies. And as the association was very assiduous and punctual in their remissions to me during my whole student-life, I will do them that credit, and also state how I usually disposed of their semi-annual donations. The money that they sent I could always manage; the worked slippers I sold to a fancy store, also the smoking-caps, ditto the book-marks, the box of clothes they used to send were of coarse, unwearable (being built by a country tailor), so I used to pawn them to Melchisedec Isaac, a Jewish gentleman, who felt so disinterested a concern in the Christian faith that he would always pay me liberally for my country clothes, half cash, and half in cigars and apple toddy. Of course, I had to learn to smoke, as it would have been a sin to waste the cigars. Let no envious person, however, say that I learned to drink apple toddy for the same reason, for I never drink apple toddy with the slightest comfort; if I take over three tumblersful, it always gives me a severe headache, and interferes with my studies.

At last I was examined, pronounced a very good article of minister, and was given a dispensation to preach; looked anxiously about for an eligible congregation to preach at, made it a subject of serious meditation, and came to this unbiased and disinterested conclusion, that the unusual turn of my mind, the nature of my acquirements, the force of my ministrations and the peculiar characteristics of my style, required that I should locate myself among a cultivated and refined people. I could plainly recognize the indications of Providence, and I bowed meekly to the fiat. I willingly gave up the brilliant glory of a missionary's grand career. I compelled myself to leave the splendid hardships and the noble trials of a frontier ministry to others; I schooled my heart to resign the glorious opportunities of winning the martyr's crown among the Caribs and Patagonians; I may say,

with excusable pride, that I mastered my natural yearnings for such distinctions, and turned without a sigh from the heavenly halo of such a splendid life and glorious death, to content myself with the inglorious ease and the undistinguished quiet of a residence amid the comforts of a city, and the numerous but nameless, undesired conveniences and unwished for pleasantnesses of a sojourn among a rich congregation.

The opportunities for self denial, and for mortification of the flesh, would be more frequent if I should be appointed to the guardianship of a people rich, very rich, in the filthy lucre, the despised dross, the miserable trash that men call money. Yes; after making it a subject of serious meditation, my unbiased and disinterested heart said—"Find a rich congregation." My heart also said other things. It remarked:—Have plenty of marriageable young ladies in your church, and be sure the said young ladies are rich; the indications of Providence may point to marriage; have several rich old maids, or widows, in your church; Providence may indicate you as the means of determining their legacies; and it is just possible that, in that event, the soul of the dying person may be moved to donate her worldly dross to the church, within even—for the ways of Providence are inscrutable—a fat slice for yourself; have no very strong-minded deacons in your church; for deacons might interfere with your management of the finances; let there be a fine parsonage attached to your church, with a garden, an orchard, a grape house, and a conservatory belonging to it; let the rich men in your church be plenty; let them be of the most estimable breed of men, the sort that take hints easily—for Providence may indicate that your studies should be continued in a direction that requires a particularly expensive library; lastly, be sure that in your church there is a doctor, who will consent to be your dearest friend, and who will not hesitate to notify your congregation should your precious health fail.

These are the things my carnal and unregenerate heart said to me, and after making it a subject of long and tearful meditation, I came to the unbiased and disinterested conclusion that my heart was right. Then I remembered that my heart had been renewed and that, of course, that the heart must be a safe and good counselor—so I accepted the said heart as my guide, without further hesitation.

Calls began to come in from various churches, that desired the services of a young and enthusiastic preacher.

Call from Brownville; church small, salary ditto—six hundred dollar a year, payable quarterly; large garden attached to parsonage; minister expected to raise his own potatoes, and keep the poor of the parish in summer squashes, gratis; made it a subject of serious consideration and decided that Providence didn't say Brownville for me; declined, on account of lack of confidence in myself, to undertake a work so responsible.

Smithville called me; salary eight hundred dollars, and collect it myself, the minister expected to give his mornings to devotion and poultry; he must sell eggs and chickens enough to keep the meeting-house in repair; furnish candles for evening prayer-meetings from his surplus turkeys, and either not pound the pulpit cushions to pieces, or else buy an annual new one from his extra goslings; market four miles off, and Deacon Squeezem keeps a horse to let, half-price to the minister. Meditated and concluded that Providence had reserved Smithville for some worthier man.

Robinsonville called—salary nine hundred dollars; parsonage roomy, with ten acres of land attached, for the minister to farm on shares with Deacon Damps; the deacon to do the ploughing, and the minister to buy the seed-wheat; neighborhood very poor and sickly; chance for an able and enthusiastic minister to do so much good that I did not feel it right of me to rob some other man of so magnificent a chance to distinguish himself by deeds of charity and love. Declined, on account of ill-health.

Jonesville called me; large congregation; salary, a thousand dollars a year, quarterly, in advance; church in a forward state of religion—all having passed the primary stages, and therefore all the

real hard work of the minister was done.

(Private information from Squiggs—lots of pretty young ladies in the congregation; two ambitious deacons, who do all the visiting; four rich widows in the village; parsonage pleasant and salary sure).

Had a long and serious meditation; was convinced that Providence indicated Jonesville for me; there was my work to be done; there was my cross to be borne; there was my crown to be won. Wrote to the church accepting terms; wrote to Squiggs, asking name of widows, descriptions of personal appearance, and also photographs of one or two of the richest. All was now settled, and I was happy that the indications of Providence were too plain to be mistaken.

Just as I had dispatched a letter asking what route I should come, another letter was brought in; it was Jenkinsville; a call—a loud call—a very loud call; a call that would be heard; town large, church handsome, salary fifteen hundred dollars a year, quarterly, in advance; parsonage all furnished; late minister gone to South Carolina; pulpit vacant; wanted me at once, and there was a check of two hundred dollars to pay traveling expenses. Was there ever a plainer Providence? Never. If the finger of Providence ever pointed anything whatever, then that finger was pointed straight to Jenkinsville, and my heart emphatically said: "To Jenkinsville; save the suffering souls, snatch them from their impending fate. To Jenkinsville, away, away!"

Another day brought a private letter from Eggley, who, knowing my taste for accurate statistics, hastened to impart the following information:

"Salary safe, society very agreeable, fifteen or twenty girls in the town with rich fathers, and one who owns two saw-mills and a lumber yard in her own right; she has red hair, but is otherwise not unusually objectionable; a dozen rich old fellows in your congregation; will die soon, and leave heaps of money to somebody. Old Leggs, one of our flock, is worth half a million, and has got chronic diseases complicated with lung fever; can't last a week; you can see him before his last exit, if you take the train day after to-morrow, at 4 A. M.; donation party twice a year; and the young ladies have 'stocking soires' once a month to make woolen hose for the clergyman; don't think the people have ever read Channing, you can pick out of one of his sermons for your first appearance, and so get a good send-off. Yours, EGGLEY."

What was easier now than to see that the Jonesville widows had been wicked temptations of the Evil One, and that the furnished parsonage of Jonesville had been a dangerous snare to my poor soul? Went on my knees to offer thanks for my wonderful escape, and then, resolving to lose no time in following the indications of Providence, now unquestionable, I at once sat down and wrote to Jenkinsville, accepted the work there so providentially opened to me, acknowledged the receipt of the check, charged them two per cent. for exchange, and now await the train that is to bear me to the scene of my pastoral labors.

Unfortunate in not Being a Heathen.

MRS. AMES was sitting in her front room, when she saw approaching Mrs. Armstrong, a very public spirited lady, who took a wonderful interest in all reforms and enterprises, especially these undertaken for the benefit of people at a distance.

"My dear Mrs. Ames," she commenced, "I am the agent of a sewing circle, just established, the object of which is to provide suitable clothing for the children in Patagonia. I am told that they are in the habit of going about in a state of nature, which you know is dreadful to contemplate."

"Perhaps they are used to it."

"But that's no reason who we should not improve their condition. So we have agreed to hold meetings two evenings in a week, with this object in view. Will you join?"

"I'm afraid I can't. I should be obliged to neglect my own children, as I presume will be the case with those who attend."

"Look, for example, at that boy in the street. He has a hole in each elbow, and his clothes are covered with mud. I presume his mother belongs to some of these benevolent associations, and hasn't time to attend to her own children."

"Mrs. Ames!" said her visitor, rising with indignation, "do you mean to insult me?"

"Insult you!" was the astonished reply; "of course not. What makes you think so?"

"Do you know who that boy is of whom you speak?"

"No, I don't; but I should like to."

"You would? Well, ma'am, your curiosity shall be gratified. He is my son—George Washington Jackson Armstrong! What have you to say to that?"

"Say?" why nothing. Only it is unfortunate for the poor boy that he wasn't a Patagonian."

Dancing to a Strange Tune.

AMONG the mad wags attached to the Santa Fe Expedition some years ago, there was not a more inveterate getter up of practical jokes than Capt. H., poor fellow! he is dead now but the memory of some of his laughable pranks still lives.

In the early history of a country whose existence is but of recent date, Capt. H. was sent by the secretary of war, on a recruiting tour through Eastern Texas. When journeying from place to place on horse back he chanced one evening to stop at a small tavern, where he soon discovered that every preparation was in progress for a ball. Ever ready and ripe for anything in the shape of fun or frolic, the captain at once resolved to "put up" at the tavern for the night and take part in the festivities.

At the time the circumstances took place, which we are about to relate, society was said to be divided into three distinct classes in Texas. First there was the aristocracy, or "upper crusts," who, from the fact that they wore shoes and stockings, were by common consent allowed to take precedence in all matters, of taste, elegance or fashion.—Then came the second, or middle class an order that wore shoes but were unable to go to the expense for stockings. The third or lower class "went barefoot" and ranked below the first mentioned grades in every respect. Thus was society divided at the date of this story.

After Capt. H. had "seen to" his horse and procured his own supper, he repaired to the ball room. There he found a promiscuous assemblage collected, many of them engaged in the giddy mazes of cotillions, jigs and country dances. He noticed, however, that none other than those who were wearing shoes and stockings were upon the floor, and as the evening wore towards midnight he ascertained that none other were allowed to take part in the dance. By this time the first society had become wearied with salutary exercise and relinquished their claim to the next in rank.

He was another monopoly, for unless a person had shoes upon his or her feet, such persons would not be allowed upon the floor. It bore heavily upon the lower orders—the shoeless and stockingless gentry—but they were compelled to submit to those arbitrary laws which always will govern alike in the most free as in the most despotic countries.

A wooden clock upon the mantel piece, which had found its way into Texas in company with some Yankee pedlar, was striking its little ones before the middle class became wearied with dancing, but by the third watch of the night they had tired themselves down and manifested a willingness to give up the floor to the next in grade.

But now a dilemma occurred which entirely spoiled the sport of those who up to this time had "no show" whatever—the fiddler who had been imbibing rather copiously of whiskey was found to be so drunk that he could not sit up on a chair, much less draw a tune from his violin. They rolled the drunken man upon the floor, they stirred him up, they rubbed his head with vinegar and they crammed an entire jar of Underwood's pickles down his throat but all would not do.

At this juncture, and when the poorer people had given up all in despair, their spirits were suddenly elated by an offer on the part of Capt. H. provided they could procure him the fiddle, to give them a tune. He knew just about as much of performing on the violin as a common negro banjo player does of the more difficult passages of the Stabat Mater, but his powers of imitation

were great, and all the little preparatory prelude in the way of turning and thumbing the strings and screwing the keys he could do as well as Paganini himself.

The dancers were in ecstasies, the fiddle was procured, and a contillon set was immediately formed on the floor. Capt. H. was in no particular hurry, but continued his flourishes in the way of turning the instrument for some time. Once or twice he drew the bow scientifically across the strings, which were now horribly out of tune—flourishes which caused the eager dancers immediately to commence "forwarding" across the floor—but the waggish captain had no intention of giving them "send off" so suddenly.

At length thinking he had infused sufficiently of the effervescence of dancing into the eager set, he drew the cork by giving every string on the violin a general rake with the bow. Away they went like mad, Capt. H. still sawing away, stamping his right foot as if keeping time, and called the figure. Never was there seen such a dance. "Chassez," "cross over," "dos a dos," were called out by the captain, amid a series of sounds from the punished violin which would set a professor crazy; but so full of dance were the head and foot couple that they carried the thing through with as much zeal as though they had been bitten by an Italian tarantulas.

It may readily be supposed that the dancers had but a limited knowledge of music but still they could tell in their cooler moment, a tune from a tornado. The first two couple had by this time finished, and the second had commenced when one of the former addressed his partner with.

"Eliza, did you ever hear that tune, he's a playing afore."

"Can't say that I ever has," was the response, and this within the hearing of Capt. H. who was still punishing the violin as severely as ever.

"Does it sound to you much like a tune, Eliza anyhow?" "Well it doesn't."

"Nor to me either," said the first speaker, who all the while had his head turned to one side after the manner of a hog listening. "My opinion that that feller there is materially jest promiscuously and miscellaneously sawin away without exactly knowin' what he's a doin'."

This was too much for the captain, who now dropped the violin, and rushed from the room and sought his quarters for the night. Thus ended a ball in Eastern Texas.

Nothing to Do.

The brave man or woman will always find something to do. I know a little woman who, by her husband's illness, has been reduced to work for a livelihood. She will do anything which is honest. One week she does some copying. The next week she is at her sewing machine; a friend's eyes are weak and she happened to say she was looking for a seamstress. At once our heroine (for are not such heroines?) stamped on her pride, which squirmed horribly and said, "Remember she was your bridesmaid, and doesn't know how very poor you are; you'd better pretend you know of a seamstress." Down came the foot, and the words are spoken bravely: "If I may take the work home, I will be very glad to it."

Another time there is sudden sickness, and a nurse is required. She goes; and so, gradually, she acquired a reputation for intense earnestness in fulfilling her duty—that of earning money for her children—and, one thing leading to another, she learns how to support her family comfortably and with ease.—Where there's a will, one can generally find a way.

Dangers of Tight Lacing.

A queer point is up before a Philadelphia court. Miss Clara M. Whipple was riding in a crowded car, and her corsets were laced so tightly that, though above the medium height, she could not raise her hands to cling to the straps. The car struck a bumper violently, and she was thrown down and broke her knee-cap. One jury has given her \$5,000 damages, and now the suit is up before the Supreme court, the company claiming that she neglected to take due precaution for her safety.